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ABSTRACT

Beginning with the Civil War and continuing through Reconstruction, black education became a national public policy issue. It was only after the Civil War that a national educational policy could be implemented throughout the nation. The initiative for black education was orchestrated primarily by blacks, the church, and federal legislation. Despite the victimization of black education, historically black colleges and universities have contributed significantly to the holistic education of blacks and have survived and thrived in their mission to educate. In an attempt to accomplish these tasks, they have emphasized counseling and student development services. Student development services provide an opportunity for students to gain knowledge about surviving socially and intellectually in a predominant white culture. This review discusses (1) the history of black student development; (2) the roles blacks, religious organizations, and the federal government played in the evolving development of the black student; (3) the student development role of historically black colleges and universities; (4) the nature and needs of today's black student; and (5) implications for addressing the needs of black students. (Contains 28 references.) (Author/EMK)

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A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BLACK STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BLACK STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

BY

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Beginning with the Civil War and continuing through Reconstruction, Black education became a national public policy issue. It was only after the Civil War that a national educational policy could be implemented throughout the nation. The initiative for Black education was orchestrated primarily by Blacks, the church, and federal legislation.

Despite the victimization of Black education. Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs) have contributed significantly to the holistic education of Blacks, and have survived and thrived in their mission to educate. In an attempt to accomplish these tasks, HBCUs focused emphasis on counseling and student development services. Student development services at HBCUs provide an opportunity for students to gain knowledge about surviving socially and intellectually in a predominant white culture.

Briefly, this research study discusses: (a) the history of Black Student Development; (b) the roles Blacks, religious organizations, and the federal government played in the evolving development of the Black student; (c) the student development role of Historically Black Colleges & Universities; (d) the nature and needs of today's Black student; and (e) implications for addressing the needs of Black students.

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A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF BLACK STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

INTRODUCTION

Over the past twenty years, the complexion of America's institutions of higher learning has become increasingly more culturally diverse. The US Census Bureau predicts that by the year 2000 that Blacks, Hispanics, and women will comprise 70% of America's college student body. As a result, many universities and colleges are wisely shifting their student development practices and policies to embrace the ideologies of their "culturally diversed" students (Hughes, 1982).

Colleges exist basically for one purpose, that of providing opportunity for student learning through instruction in various descriptions and locations (Miller & Prince, 1976). Educators today support the idea that all facets of college life are important and that faculty and student development personnel continue to maintain diverse student-support services and programs supplemented by various extra-curricular activities on campus. A comprehensive student development program is based on the roles of higher education in transmitting knowledge in an environment conducive to ample learning (Eddy, Peterson, and Pitts, 1980)

The Origins of Student Development at Predominantly White Colleges

The rise of the student development movement came about largely due to the secularization of education; the application of psychological research to problem-solving; the work of Thorndike, Cattell; and others during and after World War I; the increases in student population; and the attacks upon the intellectualistic impersonalism of American Ph.D. recipients trained in Germany (Delworth, Hanson, and Associates, 1985). Other factors such as the passage of the 1862 Morrill Land Grant College Act, the inclusion of female and minority students, and the elective system are also considered contributors to the field of student development (Eddy et al., 1980).

In 1937, the American Council on Education articulated four basic assumptions that formulated the current concepts of student development. Those assumptions included: (a) that all facets of the individual student, rather than a single attribute such as intellect, must be considered; (b) that each student is recognized as unique with unique needs and must be treated as an individual; (c) that the total environment of the student is educational and must be utilized to teach the fullest development; and (d) that the major responsibility for a student's personal, social development rests with the student's personal resources (Miller & Prince, 1976).

As college enrollments increased in size and diversity, concerns for "traditional" student development expanded to include additional aspects of the students' development. Those aspects include (a) student character, (b) psychosocial nature and needs, (c) health, (d) school environment, and (e) social responsibility. The rise of "traditional" student development has been attributed to the secularization of education, the vocational guidance movement, psychological testing, and increasingly culturally diverse student populations (Miller et al., 1976).

The Origins of Student Development at Historically Black Colleges

In contrast to "traditional" white student development, the current system of Black student development evolved from racial and hostile origins. Black education developed in a social system which denied citizenship rights, electoral participation, and economic security. This system of education was designed to dwarf the growth of Black Americans both socially, politically, and most importantly economically. By maintaining an illiterate Black workforce, southern whites were able to maintain economic domination, by keeping operational expenses low and employees dependent on cheap wages. Blacks fought against compulsory ignorance during slavery and unequal educational opportunities afterwards in order to gain social and economi

advancement (Anderson, 1988).

Up until the 1960s, Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) were primarily the exclusive avenue of access to higher education for Black students. With their open-door admission policies, HBCUs enrolled the best prepared students as well as the underprepared students. By disregarding customary admissions criteria, HBCUs were able to successfully educate Black students in defiance of the predicative validity of traditional standardized tests. The most important contributions of Historically Black Colleges and Universities have been and continue to be (a) the overall production of Black degree recipients within higher education; (b) the production of Black degree recipients in major fields and careers where Blacks are least represented, (c) the retention and more timely matriculation of Black students; (d) the provision of psychosocial support and cultural congruency for Black students; and (e) the provision of a second or third chance for low income, "academically marginal," and "high risk" students to obtain a higher education (Fleming, 1984; Gill, 1991; Hughes, 1987; Jordan-Cox, 1987; Roebuck and Murty, 1993; and Thomas and Hill, 1987).

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EVOLUTION OF BLACK STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

The Role of "Self-Reliance"

Beginning with the Civil War and continuing through Reconstruction, Black education became a national public policy issue. It was only after the Civil War that a national educational policy could be implemented throughout the south. Through national Reconstruction legislation and the activities of the local Reconstruction governments, the patterns of Black education were

established. By 1869, there were seventy-nine northern aid societies supporting Black schools in the south. The Freedmen's Bureau, established in 1865, operated over 4,239 schools with 9,300 teachers and 247,000 pupils (Berry and Blassingame, 1982).

The initiative for Black schooling lay primarily with Blacks. Southern Blacks made huge strides to educate themselves, despite white hostility. The concentrated efforts of informal and formal church-linked organizations were a vital resource in the education of Blacks. A network of Sabbath schools (also called African schools) were established during the Civil War to further the education of Blacks. Classes were in session throughout the week and met in church basements, private homes, warehouses, pool rooms, and shacks (Foner, 1988; Roebuck and Murty, 1993).

The Sabbath school system relied on local Black communities for support, and generally had all-Black teaching staffs. The importance of the Sabbath schools varied across states and localities. In some areas they constituted the only viable system of free instruction. Toward the end of the 19th century, Black leaders and educators adopted the New England classical liberal curriculum. The subjects taught in post-Civil War Black elementary, normal, and collegiate schools did not differ appreciably from those taught in northern white schools (Anderson, 1988; Frazier, 1957). The Freedmen's Bureau, northern missionary societies, and Blacks laid the foundation for the majority of Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Additional federal intervention to ensure the expansion of educational., economic, social and political opportunities for emancipated Blacks during Reconstruction was augmented by the enactment of the Civil Rights Acts in 1866, 1875, and radical Reconstruction programs (Berry and Blassingame, 1982).

Blacks formed societies and worked as craftsmen, farmers and laborers in an effort to

establish funds for private institutions. The monies raised were used to purchase land, build schoolhouses, and pay teachers' salaries. Nearly 3,000 schools were established by 1869, serving over 150,000 students. In addition, several evening and private schools were operated by missionary societies and Blacks. By 1870, Blacks expended over $1 million on private school education (Foner, 1988; Roebuck and Murty, 1993).

During the Civil War era, the short-range purpose of education was to provide enslaved Blacks with basic literacy skills. Citizenship training was provided to prepare Blacks for participation in the democratic process. Intellectual and moral development was the long range purpose of Black education. Blacks viewed education as a means of overcoming the economic and social ills of slavery. The education of Blacks was not advantageous to the economic and ideological interests of southern plantation farmers. Despite overwhelming opposition to their education pursuits, the majority of Blacks persevered in attaining an education (Anderson, 1988; Berry and Blassingame, 1982).

The Role of "the Church"

Following the Revolutionary War (1783), free Blacks established churches private schools, and fraternal organizations in northern and southern cities to worship, educate their children, and protect themselves (Roebuck and Murty, 1993). The founders and leaders of these schools and organizations were Black ministers, who assumed dominant positions in the Black communities. These Black institutions of learning provided a sense of identity as well as a means of advancement for Black youth and adults (Anderson, 1988; Frazier, 1957).

Northern missionary groups took the first steps toward developing a formal system of schools and colleges for Blacks. Following the lead of the American Missionary Association

(AMA) in 1861, several benevolent societies sent missionaries into the south to uplift freed Blacks and their children through religion, education, and material assistance. The AMA was responsible for founding seven Black colleges and thirteen normal schools between 1861 and 1870 (Roebuck and Murty, 1993).

The Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians established twenty or more secondary schools and colleges. Although the majority of the schools established by the religious organizations were called "colleges" and "universities," most of their instruction did not go beyond a secondary level. Howard University, with the support of the federal government, became a comprehensive university with the various professional schools (Anderson, 1988; Frazier, 1957).

The Role of "Reconstruction"

The public HBCUs were created by the southern state governments for three reasons: to receive millions of dollars in federal funds for the development of white land-grant universities, to limit Black education to vocational training, and to prevent Blacks from attending white land-grant colleges (Frazier, 1957; Roebuck and Murty, 1993). In order to prevent continued discrimination against Blacks in public higher education, the federal government enacted the second Morrill Act of 1890, mandating all states to provide separate educational facilities for Blacks or admit them to existing colleges. All southern and border states chose to establish "separate but equal" agricultural and industrial schools for Blacks in order to receive federal money for white land-grant colleges.

HBCUs, in this period, produced 1,100 college graduates by 1895. Many of these persons became prominent and assumed Black leadership roles then and during the early decades of the

twentieth century. These institutions were made possible by an earlier education base established by the AMA, northern church groups, the Freedmen's Bureau, and Blacks themselves. Without this base, HBCUs could not have existed (Anderson, 1988; Frazier, 1957; and Roebuck and Murty, 1993).

By law, Blacks were not permitted to attend white public or private colleges and universities during the 1800s and early 1950s. This practice foreshadowed the "separate but equal" educational system legitimized by *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Few Blacks attended and graduated from northern universities during this period. HBCUs provided the major source of higher education for Blacks. White southerners remained hostile toward any form of formal Black education (Frazier, 1957; Roebuck and Murty, 1993).

THE STUDENT DEVELOPMENT ROLE OF HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

Despite the victimization of Black Institutions, HBCUs continue to contribute significantly to the education of Blacks. Black colleges have survived and thrived in their mission to educate. To make the contributions to society successful, Black colleges assumed two tasks: helping the Black masses adjust personally and socially to mainstream cultural norms and producing an enterprising class of Blacks to serve as leaders and be self-sufficient (Traylor, 1983). To accomplish these tasks, Black colleges focused emphasis on their student development services. These services are a major priority at Black institutions. Student development programs at Black colleges provide an opportunity for students to gain knowledge about surviving socially and intellectually in a culturally diverse society.

Black students are heterogeneous and diverse due to demographic, social and technological changes (Blackwell, 1981). Their diverse needs require a wide array of student services. Black adult development is extremely important because of the student constituency served. Student development theories, student-support programs, curricular and extracurricular, should be designed to meet the special needs of nontraditional groups (Hughes, 1982, and Schlossberg, Lynch and Chickering, 1989; Terrell, 1990). A review of current literature suggests that the majority of Black adult development literature centers on (a) racial awareness or racial identity development; (b) career choices and decidedness, and most importantly (c) academic and social development (Cheatham and Slaney, 1990). These factors, crucial for psychosocial development, provide means for studying the development of Black adult students.

Every college and university in the country (whether public or private, 2-year or 4-year, or graduate) are in the business of shaping lives, lives that reflect much more than academic learning (Chickering, 1981). Those responsible for teaching and helping Black students must create models of human and student development that take into account the unique needs and experiences that Black students bring to college. Issues specific to the Black adult development that are not inclusive in traditional adult development theories include: (a) the unique psycho-history of Blacks in this country and the adaptations that Blacks must make; (b) the "colonized" nature of Black existence in this country; (c) the extended nature of the Black family and Black home life; (d) the unique educational/ socialization role of the Black family; (f) the impact of racial hostility and environmental press; (g) the unique character of Black Americans; (h) the psychological dynamics that accompany being a "caste-like minority" representing a "rejected strain" in society, being "codified", and attempting to reconcile two identities; and (i) the

philosophical connections to African tradition, action/belief connection, elastic concept of time, kinship tradition/group consciousness, survival focus (collective versus individual), spiritual disposition, and view of people as an integrated whole (McEwen, Roper, Bryan, and Langa, 1990, p.430).

Tracing the history of formalized counseling and student development in HBCUs, Traylor's (1983) study suggested these services began between 1946 and 1948. The study also concluded that the trend of services were motivated and influenced by concerns to meet the needs of Negro war veterans. Specifically, HBCUs focused their student development policies and programs towards addressing the students' education, occupational adjustment, health, and personality. Overall, Historically Black Colleges and Universities have incorporated the responsibility of fostering a productive student development environment as one of its primary missions.

By focusing on issues, concerns, and problems of student development and the nature and needs of the Black students, HBCUs have fostered a comprehensive philosophy on the principles and practices of student development services. Philosophically, HBCUs subscribe to the concept that the individual should be responsible for his/her own personal growth. The individual's growth, however, is influenced by his/her environment. The college as a vital part of the students' environment must design structured experiences that would allow the student to develop in a positive manner (Traylor, 1983). Such psychosocial experiences should encompass the administration of the following: (a) flexible housing, (b) orientation services, (c) peer mentoring programs, (d) peer tutoring programs, (e) seminars on computer skills, (f) a wellness (exercise) program, (g) financial aid, (h) study skills management, (i) leadership seminars, (j) developmental

education classes, and (k) counseling services.

SUMMARY

One way of responding to the needs of Black students is to expand psychosocial theories of college student development to address the experiences of Black students (McEwen et al., 1990). Often, the psychosocial climate of a university has a tremendous affect on students, especially those from culturally diverse backgrounds (Gavin, 1989). Many of today's Black students are nontraditional or adult students who return to college "later" in life. Many nontraditional students are recognized as women, minorities, parents over 30 years of age, full-time white-collar employees earning middle-class salaries, and residents of urbanized areas.

Black students returning to college during their "later" years often experience an array of psychosocial conflicts and needs (Glass and Rose, 1986; Hughes, 1982; St. Pierre, 1987; and Terrell, 1990). Most returning students are independent, motivated, responsible, practical, self-directed and learning-focused (Payne and Sulley, 1992). However, some underprepared students experience a lack of self-confidence, role conflict, fear of inferiority or isolation, fear of taking risks, feelings of dependency, and a lack of identity (Muench, 1987). Colleges and universities are challenged to address the diverse needs of various age groups and cultures and to facilitate the appropriate integrated student services. College programs must implement theoretical-based services and programs to address the tasks and issues of their culturally diverse student populations.

In general, to assist the Black students in developing their academic skills fully, college personnel must implement theories, student services and support programs that promote the

student's academic, social, and personal (psychosocial) development (Pounds, 1987). Professionals who employ student development theories, either in their research or in service delivery to minority students, should make efforts to understand cultural and social environmental variables as they relate to specific minority group members (Wright, 1987). Effective Black student development cannot be successfully implemented without addressing the developmental issues of that culturally diverse student population.

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